Details about Import of Rubber

1278. SHRI M. A. BABY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details regarding the import of natural as well as synthetic rubber by Government and private parties during the last two years; and

(b) whether Government propose to permit private parties to import natural or synthetic rubber in the year 1993-94 and 1994-95 if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The details regarding import of natural as well as synthetic rubber by the Government and private parties during the last two years are as under:—

	On Govt Account (Tonnes)		Private Parties (Manufacturers directly under export incentive scheme)	
	Natural Rubber	Synthetic Rubber	Natural Rubber	Synthetic Rubber
1991-92 . .	NIL	NIL	14500	39800
1992-93 . .	NIL	NIL	16498(P)	50118(P)

P—Provisional

(b) Import of natural rubber is allowed to only to such an extent so as to meet the demand-supply gap. The estimated production and consumption of natural rubber during 1993-94 is 4,40,000 tonnes and 4,51,000 tonnes respectively. In order to meet the demand-supply gap, the Government had allowed the rubber consuming industry to import 10,000 metric tonnes of natural rubber during the lean production period of 1993-94. The actual import as per information available is only 4131 tonnes. However, it is too early to indicate the position regarding import of natural rubber during 1994-95.

The import of synthetic rubber is allowed under the Open General Licence (OGL) system.

Fall in Price of Rubber

1279. SHRI M. A. BABY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken note of the fall in the price of rubber; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken or are proposed to be taken to deal with the situation in order to protect the interest of the growers?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir but the prices are still above the Bench Mark.

(b) A Buffer Stocking Scheme is being operated from 1986 to ensure reasonable return to the rubber growers and making available rubber to the consuming industry at a fair price. However, it is too early to indicate the position regarding procurement of Rubber at present. As and when the need arises, the procurement is normally made at lower limit of the price and on the basis of the existing Bench Mark Price, under the Buffer Stocking Scheme.

Imposition of levy on Products Marked for Exports

1280. SHRI MENTAY PADMANBHAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have requested State Governments not to impose levies on products which are ear-marked totally for imports;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Government of Andhra Pradesh has recently imposed huge rate of levy on marine products particularly shrimph caught in Vishakhapatnam for export;

(c) whether Government have taken up this issue with the Government of Andhra Pradesh, if so, details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Government has been requesting State Governments from time to time not to impose levies on products which are earmarked entirely for exports.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has been requested not to levy purchase tax on marine products earmarked for exports.

(d) Does not arise.

Coordinated Strategy for Farm Exports

1281. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have noted recent criticism from various quarter that there is no coordinated strategy for farm exports;

(b) whether there is any proposal for better coordination among Commerce, Agriculture and Food Processing Ministries; and

(c) if not whether a separate division would be set up for farm exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) The policy of Government on agricultural exports has already been placed on the Table of the House in the draft Agricultural Policy Resolution. While agricultural exports provide the farmer an expanded market, and therefore possibility of a higher price, the policy has also been framed in such a way to ensure the availability of items of mass consumption.

To ensure coordination among the Ministries of Commerce Agriculture and Food Processing, besides discussions at the official level, these Ministries are represented in various Commodity Boards like Agricultural and Processed Food Export Development Authority, Tobacco Board, Spices Board etc.

(c) A separate division for export Promotion of agricultural products already exists in the Ministry of Commerce.

Protecting Indian Plant Varities in the Dunkel Draft

1282. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any provision has been made in the Dunkel Draft for patenting Indian Plant varieties;

(b) whether Government have issued orders for exporting various seeds and plants under the Dunkel Draft proposal; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Paragraph 3(b) of Article 27 of the draft agreement on TRIPs provides that "..... members shall provide for the protection of plant varieties either by patents or by an effective sui generis system or by any combination thereof .....". In respect of the option of 'effective sui generis' system no details have been spelt out nor is there any reference to any existing international instrument pertaining to plant variety protection, thus some flexibility has been left to each country to design its plant variety protection law to suit its national requirements. The Dunkel Draft does not impose any obligation to export seeds and plants.